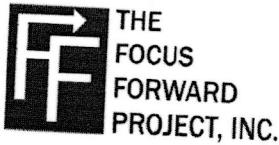


Letter of Support - Stephanie D... Done



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November 21, 2024

Hon. Lorna G. Schofield
United States District Court
Southern District of New York

Dear Judge Schofield,

We, Megan Rodriguez and Trenton Ullrich, write in support of Stephanie Davila, who is a soon-to-be graduate of The Focus Forward Project. The Focus Forward Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing an educational curriculum focused on reentry for individuals charged with federal crimes. Our classes are offered for people who are incarcerated and for those under pretrial supervision. The 12-week course is designed to provide both an intellectual and emotional outlet for participants as they navigate the stress and uncertainty of the pretrial phase of their federal cases. The class meets once a week for two hours, and participants complete weekly reading, journal, and other homework assignments. The first half of each class is spent discussing and connecting with themes in the memoir, *The Bite of the Mango*, by Mariatu Kamara with Susan McClelland, the former being a young girl who survived the Sierra Leone civil war; while the second half of each class focuses on life skills, highlighting a different skill each week. By the end of the course, participants will have gained a variety of transferable skills and tools, including, but not limited to: a completed resume, interview skills, conflict resolution skills, public speaking skills, and the setting of both short and long-term goals. The goal of The Focus Forward Project is to provide participants with the confidence and practical tools to successfully move forward with their lives. Stephanie has completed so far all requirements necessary to graduate from Focus Forward and will be recognized at our graduation ceremony in January, 2025.

Having Stephanie as a member of our class has truly been a privilege. From day one, she stepped up to the plate as a dynamic discussion leader, not shying away from difficult conversations about emotions, setbacks in life, or deep conversations about the themes and topics that emerged during our reading of *The Bite of the Mango*. Stephanie would always strike a wonderful balance between getting the conversation going and knowing when to sit back and let her classmates contribute to the discussion. Her peers very evidently look to her as inspiration for finding their own voice, often following Stephanie's lead in sharing what's on their mind after she, without hesitation, led the way. In addition to her wonderfully earnest contributions to our class



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Throughout the weeks that we have worked with Stephanie, we have come to know a young woman who is dedicated to learning from her past, reflecting on areas where she can grow, and working to build a better future for herself and loved ones. Stephanie is kind, intelligent, and thoughtful. We have every confidence that Stephanie, if given the opportunity, will continue on the path towards bettering her life - the one that led her to join the Focus Forward Project in the first place.

We appreciate the time Your Honor has taken to read our letter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our supervisors at the Focus Forward Project by phone or email: (347) 619-2080 or info@focusforwardproject.org.

Sincerely,
Megan Rodriguez

Trenton Ullrich



Trenton Ullrich